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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit, designed for grades 7-12, integrates various artistic disciplines with geography, history, social studies, media, and technology. This unit on William Butler Yeats, the writer, and Jack Yeats, the painter, seeks to immerse students in a study of the brothers as voices of Ireland and as two of the most renowned artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The unit is dedicated also to helping students see how the outlook of an age controls cultural expression, and how this expression is articulated in similar ways throughout genres of art. To help effect these major goals, focus in the unit is placed on: the impact of geography, place, and family on both William Butler Yeats and Jack Yeats; the influence of personalities of the time period on the two artists; and also, the ways both Yeats align, in philosophical construct and creative expression, with the dynamic changes that occurred during the time period. The 6-lesson unit is designed for use either in its completeness or in such a way that individual lessons can be accessed. It presents an overview; lists equipment and materials needed; discusses standards; and outlines content acquisition, process skills, and strategies. Each lesson provides a detailed, step-by-step instructional plan. Lessons are entitled: (1) Influence of Landscape on William Butler Yeats; (2) Influence of Environment on Jack Yeats; (3) Influences and Change for William and Jack Yeats; (4) Individual Fingerprints: The Mature Years; (5) Sections of Yeats's Poetry Related to His Involvement with the Irish Nationalist Movement; and (6) Jack Yeats: A Few Samplings from the Mature Years. (NKA)

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Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Magic Words, Magic Brush: The Art of William Butler and Jack Yeats

Introduction

OVERVIEW:
This curriculum unit, designed for grades 7-12, fully integrates various artistic disciplines with geography, history, social studies, media and technology. The unit is designed for use either in its completeness or in such a way that individual lessons can be accessed.

This unit on William Butler Yeats, the writer, and Jack Yeats, the painter, is dedicated to immersing students in a study of the brothers as voices of Ireland, and as two of the most renowned artists of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is dedicated also to evoking students to see how the outlook of an age controls cultural expression, and how this expression is articulated in similar ways throughout genres of art. To help effect these major goals, focus is placed on: the impact of geography, place, and family on both William Butler Yeats and Jack Yeats; the influence of personalities of the time period on the two artists; also, the ways both Yeats align, in philosophical construct and creative expression, with the dynamic changes that occurred in the last part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS:

- Maps/ scenes/ paintings of Ireland, particularly of places significant to William Butler and Jack Yeats' background;
- A collection of Irish folk tales, myths, and legends; for instance, Yeat's Mythologies, and Lady Gregory's Gods and Fighting Men
- Sources that give background on: Celtic domination of Europe; Ireland as the refuge of learning and culture during the barbaric invasions of Europe; the Druids; Celtic art and language; and ancient Celtic myths and legends. T. W. Rolleston's, Celtic, is a rich source for the latter. Seamus Heaney's new translation of Beowulf would be a good companion source.
- An anthology of Yeats' poetry; also, excerpts from his autobiography
- Prints of Jack Yeats' artwork

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- Prints of art work of artists who were experimenting in new genres of art expression in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Whistler, Sargant; the Art Nouveau movement; Ash Can School; Cubists as examples)
- Biographies of Jack Yeats (Arnold -JackYeats); Rosenthal- The Art of Jack Yeats
- An anthology of English and American literature
- Selected poems of Stephane Mallarme
- Time and the Dancing Image - Deborah Jowitt
- Tapes and/ or CD's of a wide variety of traditional music of Ireland
- Video of Riverdance; video tapes of other dancers covered in the lessons that follow
- Computer access

Instructional Objectives

STANDARDS:

National Arts Standards:
Dance Content Standards: 7-8, 9-12
Music Content Standards: 7-8, 9-12
Theatre Content Standards: 7-8, 9-12

CONTENT ACQUISITION:

Students will:

- become familiar with the landscape of Ireland, identifying diverse aspects of the geographical contours.
- broaden and deepen their knowledge of early European history, through study of the Celts and Celtic influence
- be introduced (or reintroduced) to the term "syncretic" as it relates to the history of Ireland and the development of Irish culture
- become knowledgeable about specific areas of Ireland that influenced W. B. Yeats' work (Sligo; Lady Gregory's estate, Coole; Isle of Innisfree; Dublin; etc.) and the impact of Yeats family as an influence on his work.
- become knowledgeable about specific places and experiences that influences Jack Yeats' work
- acquaint themselves with Irish legends, and myths, particularly those that resonate in the works of W. B.and Jack Yeats'
- be evoked to consider recurring narrative patterns throughout myths of many culture
- expand their knowledge of how modern poets build on ancient myths and legends.
- recognize dominant voices of influence in the reconfiguring of the philosophical outlook and the psychological temperament of the culture of the late nineteenth and twentieth century, and in realigning themes and forms of artistic expression in this time period.
- increase their awareness of how events of the age, WWI, WWII, growth in technology, etc. and the shift in social and cultural climate contributed to this dramatic change.
- initiate or add to their experience in assessing levels of objectivity and subjectivity in art expression

- expand their experience in the genres of autobiography and biography, abstracting evidences of subjectivity in the author's presentation
- initiate or deepen their experience with dominant art and literary movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as Impressionism, Expressionism, Art Nouveau, Cubism, Ash Can School; also, the Realists, Imagists, Symbolists
- gain awareness of how prevailing elements of artistic expression in a given time period can be identified in several genres of the fine and performing arts, i.e., common denominators in styles of a period can be found in painting, dance, music, literature
- recognize diverse forms of dance expression emerging in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- familiarize themselves with the political upheaval in Ireland, specifically the growth of Irish national aspirations, and will explore the current political climate of Ireland.
- strengthen their understanding of the differentiation in the philosophical outlook and artistic expression of three areas of intellectual/western literary history: Romanticism; Victorianism; and Modernism and how Yeats is positioned in this cycle of change.
- expand their understanding of theories of the creative process and of conceptual ideas of Beauty by examining their own and writer's definitions of these abstractions and explicating the two Yeats' work in relation to the examined theories and ideas.
- gain new understanding of and enhanced appreciation for the rich contributions of Ireland and the Anglo-Irish to the universal, and especially, American cultural development

PROCESS SKILLS:

Students will:

- improve their map-reading skills through close study of the landscape of Ireland
- develop more clarity, poise, and persuasion in oral skills through expectations of performance in oral presentation
- strengthen skills and vocabulary of critical analysis of literature through close textual study of themes and forms of Yeats' poetry
- sharpen comparative skills of analysis by mining the various influences on W. B. and Jack Yeats and making connections between and among other genres of art expression
- grow in skills of the writing process through follow-through in a variety of creative and expository writing assignments
- exercise collaborative skills through working on small group problem-solving projects
- gain added maturity in skills of problem-solving, hypothesizing, and synthesizing
- increase skills in computer technology through Internet research and the development of Web page design
- develop discernment in visual literacy through analyzing film and constructing illustrated video "essays"
- gain new skills in and appreciation for the value of expanding research to several areas of media

Strategies

Students will engage in a variety of assignments and activities, developed with attention to developmental and age level appropriateness:

- map study
- Internet and print media research
- Web design
- video script development
- personal interviews
- collaborative problem-solving activities
- formal explication of themes and forms of selected poems
- performance - research presentation; oral reading of poems; Irish music, dance; dramatizations; dance improvisations of selected Yeats' poems; drawings related to poems
- class discussion, with an aim to synthesize background material and inculcate
- explication of texts
- impromptu "conversations"
- seminar study and presentation
- essays of critical analysis
- creative and expository writing assignments

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Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Magic Words, Magic Brush: The Art of William Butler and Jack Yeats

Curriculum

LESSON ONE: The Influence of Landscape on William Butler Yeats
This lesson plan, designed for grades 7-12, aims to teach students about the influence the landscape of Ireland (the Giant Causeway, Belfast, Trinity College, etc.) had on shaping the poetic voice of William Butler Yeats. It forms a strong base of knowledge about Irish history for the following two lessons.

LESSON TWO: The Influence of Environment on Jack Yeats
Jack, as well as W. B. Yeats, spent considerable time at their maternal grandparents' home in Sligo. As a child, he constructed imaginative line drawings of coastlines, pirates, pirate coves and villages. He also constructed a miniature theater and developed and produced dramatic manuscripts, many of which centered on pirates and sea adventures. This consuming interest in the sea would be evident in his works throughout his life, enhanced by his eventual close relationship with the poet, John Masefield. This lesson plan is designed to help students access the above influences as they are evidenced in the drawings and paintings of Jack Yeats.

LESSON THREE: Influences and Change for William and Jack Yeats
W. B. Yeats was born in 1865 and died in 1939. Jack Yeats was born in 1871 and died in 1957. These dates are of very special significance to any study of the two artists because the time spans mirror the dramatic changes that occurred in the philosophical, political, social, and ensuing cultural landscapes of the last part of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. This lesson is designed to help students better understand the shifting dynamics that would unsettle and re-contour the cultural expression of the above time period, and to use this background to help penetrate the complexity of the themes and forms found in the works of W. B. and Jack Yeats.

LESSON FOUR: The Individual Fingerprints: the Mature Years

LESSON FIVE: Selections of Yeats' poetry related to his involvement in the Irish Nationalist movement

LESSON SIX: Jack Yeats: A Few Samplings From The Mature Years

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Lesson I: The Influence of the Landscape of Ireland on Shaping the Poetic Voice of William Butler Yeats

Assign students to gather information through web, print media, and where appropriate, interviews with people who have lived, visited, or have ancestral roots in Ireland, for the purpose of developing a profile of the landscape of Ireland and the connotative implications of what it means to be "Irish".

Lead students, as a class, in examining a map of Ireland, pointing out special places of interest such as the Giant Causeway; Belfast, where the Titanic was built; the Folkway Museum; the dividing line that marks Northern Ireland from the Republic of the South; Trinity College in Dublin where the Book of Kells resides, etc.

Share paintings of scenes of Ireland and prints of Celtic art.

Encourage students who have Irish roots to share anecdotes, sing songs, perform dances related to their heritage.

Show the video Riverdance; assign students interested in dance and music to research and present on the influence and manifestation of Irish influence on the dance and music of vaudeville, Broadway musicals, and Hollywood.

Assign a group of students to research and report back on the growth of the Irish Nationalist Movement and the present political situation; assign another group to research other "sea-change" events in the history of Ireland, for instance, the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the cottage linen and factory linen industry, the devastation of the Plague, the potato famine, emigration patterns.

Another group could be assigned to research Celtic origins, the impact of Viking, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Celtic invasions on Europe and, especially, Ireland, the early infusion of the Scots into Ireland, etc. Give particular attention to conjecturing the impact on the development of language, art expression, and music.

Discuss the term "Gaelic", particularly as it relates to the Goidelic speech of the Celts in Ireland.

Following the sharing of the above background material, consider the terms "syncretic" and "syncretism". After exploring the meaning of the terms, examine the implication of how the basic concept of the terms relate to the history of Ireland and to the present Irish culture.

Return to the map of Ireland and identify specific geographical places related to Yeats' work. Divide the class into small groups, then assign each group a place related to Yeats to research, through Internet, print media, and personal interview (where applicable), and report back. For instance:

- Sligo
- Isle of Innisfree
- Thoor Ballylee
- Dublin
- Lady Gregory's Estate - Coole Park
- Galway

In sharing findings, encourage students to comment on the physical nature of the landscape and Yeats' experience in the area.

Realign groups. Assign groups to explore myths and legends of Ireland, again using several media for the search. Encourage them especially to explore and report back on narratives such as those related to:

- Cuchulain and Deirdre
- Fergus
- Leprechauns
- Pooka
- The Giant Causeway
- Finn
- Lugh
- Maev

Initiate a discussion in which students identify narrative patterns, coming through Celtic and Irish myths and legends, that they have encountered in other sources; for instance, fairy tales, King Arthur legends; modern movies and cartoons.

As a follow-up assignment, have students consider the words "enchant", "enchanted", "enchantment". Construct a jot list of specific things that come to mind when they hear those words. (For instance, faeries, mist, banshees; romantic heroes and heroines).

Share the definitions Yeats gives of "faeries", "banshees", and "leprechauns" in his Fairy and Folktales of Ireland collection.

Share the "enchanted" lists and discuss other possibilities that emerge connotatively from the words.

Consider, again, the geography of Ireland. What aspects of the landscape would evoke the idea of "enchanted"? Does the fact that Ireland is an island contribute to the aura of "enchantment?

Then have students develop a manuscript (poem, vignette of drama or prose) about one of the geographical places in Ireland, projecting the idea of "enchanted" through creating their own myth or developing a variation of an Irish myth they have encountered in their research.

Have students share their manuscripts in small groups; have each group identify any manuscript they think is compelling enough to share in the large group and be prepared to give specific evidence from the text of the writing as to why they find it "compelling".

Sum up, inductively, a working definition of the judgment word "compelling" by having students, in large group discussion, construct a list of specific elements they have identified as constituting a "compelling" manuscript.

Have class members read orally selected poems from Yeats' early writings. Some suggestions are:

- *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* {Note: there is an Irish Ballad titled the same; consider having a student(s) or students sing the ballad)
- *The Madness of King Goll*
- *Who Goes With Fergus?*
- *Down by the Salley Gardens*
- *The Stolen Child*
- *The Fisherman* {Note: there is an Irish song called "Connemara Lullaby" that could serve a companion piece to this poem.}
- *The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland*
- *The Fiddler of Dooney* (Note: there are some excellent CDs featuring Irish fiddlers that could accompany this poem; for instance,"kevin burke in concert. Burke's repertoire on this CD also includes the tune, "Up Sligo")
- *The Wild Swans at Coole* (a later poem, but one that would be appropriate within the context of geograpical study of Ireland; also, students could be assigned to search out other poems in which the swan image prevails, such as in John Hollander's poem, Swan and Shadow. Some students might be interested in researching migoratory patterns of swans; also, the implication of the term "monogamy" in relation to swans and the origin of the terms, "swansong".and "swan dive". Students interested in dance could be assigned a special project on the choreography and music of the ballet, "Swan Lake". A video of a performance of the ballet could add enrichment to a study of the poem. Students interested in art could make sketches or painting of swans; students who live in the migoratory areas could photograph swans.
- *Coole Park*, 1929 - (also a later poem, but one that is also geography- centered)

Explicate one or two of the poems in large group discussion, giving careful attention to the process of explication by defining structural elements, diction, tone, syntax, images, rhythm and theme, assisting students to see how the theme emerges from the craftsmanship of the poem(s). Also, have students identify specific references in the poem(s) to the landscape of Ireland, specific geographical places, Irish myths and legends, other influences on Yeats.

Example: The Lake Isle of Innisfree
Discuss the implication of the structural pattern of the poem, for instance, the repetition of "I will arise and go now…", the juxtaposition of what follows the line in the first stanza in relation to what follows in the last stanza and what it contributes to the theme. Note the images in lines 3 and 4, and draw comparison to Thoreau's Walden, perhaps reading aloud segments of the Chapter, "The Beanfield", reminding students of Yeats' early experience with Walden through his father's reading.

Consider the texture of the poem, for instance, the diction, images, rhythm. Identify sensory images, underlining key words that build sensory impressions of sounds, sight, olfactory, tactile, taste experiences. Identify alliterative, onomatopoetic, and assonant sounds; discuss how these sounds contribute to the tone quality of the poem. Raise the question: What is the tone quality of the poem and how does tone contribute to the theme?

Consider aspects of the poem that resonate Yeats' early love for the Romantic poets (mystical; longing to bond with Nature, etc.). Go back to the words "enchanting" and "compelling"; ask students to take a position about whether or not the poem matches the definitions constructed by the class.

Explore, in class discussion, the terms "lyrical", "lyricist", and "lyricism". Also discuss the terms "assonance" and "dissonance". Have students draw examples from music they are familiar with to help clarify the difference in these tone qualities. Discuss what musical instruments would project the tones. How would a dancer project the tones in dance? How would a fashion designer express the tone qualities in his/her design?

Have students craft vignettes of prose or poems that express the above tone qualities

Assign students to develop a written explication of a poem, not covered in class, from Yeats' early period.

Play a recording of some of the Irish ballads that resonate themes found in Yeats' poetry, for instance, the song, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"; also, encourage students to research specific ways Appalachian folk tunes and Bluegrass music mirror some of the traditional Irish folk tunes. (Folkway Museum in Northern Ireland has a list of resources)

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Curriculum

Lesson II: The Early Influences of Environment on the Development of Jack Yeats as an Artist.

Overview:
Jack, as well as William Butler Yeats, spent considerable time at the maternal grandparents' home in Sligo. The grandfather was a ship owner, and it was at Sligo that Jack became particularly drawn to the sea. As a child, he constructed imaginative line drawings of coastlines, pirates, pirate coves and villages. He also constructed a miniature theater and developed and produced dramatic manuscripts, many of which centered on pirates and sea adventures. This consuming interest in the sea would be evident in his works throughout his life, enhanced by his eventual close relationship with the poet, John Masefield.

Another passion of Jack's would emerge as a direct result of the experience he had when attending art school in London. Having purchased a season ticket to the American Exhibition at Earl's Court, he became imbued with the star of the exhibition, Colonel "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Thus developed a passion for a romantic vision of the Wild West that would prevail not only in his early works, but also as a recurring strand in his artistic expression throughout his life. As observed by T. J. Rosenthal, the influence would be projected even in his pirate and circus themes. The following activities are designed to help students access the above influences as they are evidenced in the drawings and paintings of Jack Yeats.

*(The above biographical material is drawn primarily from the text by T. J. Rosenthal. The following lesson designs related to Jack Yeats also draw on the background material provided in the Rosenthal source.)

A. The Influence of the Sea on Jack Yeats' Work

- Read, in a large group, John Masefield's poem, "Sea Fever."
- Following discussion of the poem, divide students into "search teams", giving each team the mission to find poems related to the sea, but crafted in diverse poetic patterns. For instance, one group would collect a few sample ballads which had strong references to the sea; another group would collect sonnets, etc.

- As part of the above assignment, clarify that each member of the team will have to assume one of the following defined responsibilities in reporting back, making sure that all of the components are covered: clarifying the poetic pattern (implication of stanza divisions, where applicable; scanning; tone quality; thematic structure(s); type of images and other poetic devices such as alliteration, etc.; nature of the persona (ae) of the poem(s) , where applicable.
- Have, as a special project, a few students perform sea shanties; also, students interested in dance might familiarize themselves and perform steps of the traditional sailor's hornpipe. (Note that the personae in Yeats' drawings suggest the shantey and hornpipe association.)
- Build a teacher-led discussion of various genres of art expression, centered particularly on the prevailing modes of Yeats ' work. If possible, have an art teacher clarify some of the technical implications of the genres: line drawings; caricatures; watercolors; oils.
- Encourage students interested in art to make their own drawing, painting, (or sculpture) of the sea and/or sea- related subjects.
- As a class, decode elements of selected Yeats' prints, both early and later works that have sea-related themes. Encourage them to act as "detectives", assigning them, for instance, to construct hypothetical profiles of the persona(ae) in the print, giving the figure(s) a name, conjecturing where and the nature of the place they are presently inhabiting or where they are headed.
- Consider expanding on the above conjecturing about aspects of a Yeats print with a collaborative assignment in which, within a small group, each member would take on one of the following responsibilities: build an exposition for a story based on clues in the print; develop a characterization (s) of the figures displayed in the print; drawing from various "clues" and the tone quality of the print create the outline of a narrative, defining a conflict and a denouement that could be developed in story or drama form. Have each group share its narrative design.

B. The Influence of the "Wild West" on Jack Yeats' Articulation of Theme

- Brainstorm, in large group discussion, the implication of the term, "Wild West".
- Show students a few clips from an old Western movie (Tom Mix, Gene Autrey, Roy Rogers, etc.).
- As an exercise in visual literacy and a readiness for further study of Yeats' work, ask students to delineate aspects of the film clips: for instance, the prevailing pattern of narrative; the portrayal of the protagonist (in dress, gesture, goals, etc.), the repetitive patterns of exposition (setting), such as the bar scene, cattle drive, lone trail across the desert, etc.); also, thematic projections of the portrayal of violence, the "lone-ranger" concept of the "heroic".
- Suggest that students interested in the development of the cowboy and "Wild West" idiom read one of Zane Grey's novels.
- Discuss Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis".
- Play or have a student(s) sing one or two cowboy songs (Home On the Range, for instance); also, the Folkway Museum in Northern Ireland lists "Cowboy Songs on Folkways" which could serve as a resource for this activity
- Assign students to search Web and print media for background on William "Buffalo Bill" Cody.
- Read and discuss e.e. cummings poem, Buffalo Bill's Defunct.
- Assign students to research Web and print media for background on the development of the Circus (particularly European and Irish connections with Barnum and Bailey in the early stages of their circus development) and specifics on the American Exhibition at Earl's Court.

- As an individual assignment or as a collaborative project, have student(s) extract a figure out of an Irish folktale or legend and build an illustrated booklet in which the figure, setting , and storyline, are developed in patterns of the "Wild West" or circus exposition.
- Conduct a close study of selected Yeats' prints. Assign students "detective" roles to search out qualities in Yeats' work that seem to reflect resonating aspects of his exposure to the Buffalo Bill circus environment.
- As part of the above examination, suggest that students compare JackYeats' drawings and paintings of circus clowns and scenes with those of Picasso. (palette; costumes; faces; focus of settings; any narrative patterns; general tone quality).
- Consider having students construct a video and/or a Web page, in which they present their conclusions, giving specific evidence of what informed their conclusions. Ideally, these constructions would be interdisciplinary in nature, incorporating art prints, music, dance, and written and/or oral script.

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Curriculum

Lesson III: The Influences and Change

Overview:
W. B. Yeats was born in 1865 and died in 1939. Jack Yeats was born in1871 and died in 1957. These dates are of very special significance to any study of the two artists because the time spans mirror the dramatic changes that occurred in the philosophical, political, social, and ensuing cultural landscapes of the last part of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. The dates also serve as a frame in which to examine further the influences of places and people, including family, on the two maturing artists. The following suggested instructional activities are designed to help students better understand the shifting dynamics that would unsettle and re-contour the cultural expression of the above time period, and to use this background to help penetrate the complexity of the themes and forms found in the works of W. B. and Jack Yeats.

A. The Changing Cultural Milieu

Align students in three or four person teams, each team to research and then construct brief summaries, for formal class presentation, of key philosophical concepts of one of the following: Darwin; Marx; Freud; Jung; and Nietzsche. Encourage the teams to read excerpts from primary sources and to center the presentation on the idea base of their assigned source, avoiding long biographical accounts

Following presentations, lead a discussion on the impact of the above theorists on the outlook of the age, evoking students to probe their knowledge of history (with teacher input) to consider, inductively, how the ideas of the above sources could effect dramatic change in the ways people thought about themselves and their world.

As a separate discussion, or integrated into the above, explore the implication of the Industrial Revolution, growth of technology, and WWI and WWII on the social, political, and cultural psyche of the age.

Assign students to read the chapter, "The Dynamo and the Virgin", an excerpt from Henry Adams', The Education of Henry Adams. As a follow-up, through discussion or writing, test them on their understanding of the implication of the two images as developed by Adams in the chapter.

Divide the class into three-person groups. Assign each group the task of drawing together a general profile of the mindset of late 19th and early 20th century, drawing from earlier discussions and readings and from previous work they have done in history, literature, language courses, science, etc..

As a follow-up, initiate an open discussion of the assertion: When the cultural outlook changes, so does art expression (in both theme and form), fashion, architecture, interior design, manners and mores, etc. mirrors the change..

Assign students interested in dance to give a presentation and/or demonstration of Isadora Duncan's work. This special activity should particularly address the fact that much of Duncan's work was inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution and Nietzche's ideas.

B. William Butler Yeats: Reflective Mirror

Overview:
One of many fascinating aspects in the study of William Butler Yeats and his writing is the tracing of the impact of the dynamic forces of cultural change on the themes and forms of his work. This study is enhanced, particularly, when translating that impact through the filter of the sweeping changes in art expression throughout the canons of literary and fine and performing arts of that time period and the range of personalities with whom Yeats interacted. Yeats' autobiography is a rich testimony documenting his association with people and ideas that influenced him. His work, itself, provides the hard evidence of how his individual fingerprint emerges from the tug and pull of various people and ideas on his art expression.
In his autobiography, Yeats recounts how he was introduced to the great Romantic voices of Blake, Shelley, Keats, and other Romantics, and the American Transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau, through his father reading aloud to him early on. The autobiography also records how, as he began to hone his skill as a poet and dramatist (he also did some painting), he was drawn to the works of Victorian, Alfred Lord Tennyson and, particularly, to the art and philosophy of the Pre-Raphaelites. Others voices, often through direct interaction, would have tremendous impact on Yeats and his work: for instance, J. M. Synge, Oscar Wilde, William Morris, Henry Adams; members of the Rhymer's Club (which Yeats helped to found); Ezra Pound; and Lady Gregory. And, of course, any study of Yeats must give recognition to his mutable association with the Irish Nationalist Movement and his consuming, unrequited love for Maud Gonne.

The following lesson designs are dedicated to immersing students in activities that give them insight into the complex forces of influence and change as Yeats moves back and forth in the environments of Sligo, London, and Dublin and how his work absorbed and transcended these influences to create the unique "Yeatsian" voice.

Introduce students to the Imagists by examining Ezra Pound's brief poem, "In the Station of the Metro". Encourage students to ponder Pound's assertion that " In a poem of this sort, one is trying to

record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself into a thing inward and subjective." (a quote that will be helpful in explicating Yeats' poetry). Clarify the equation of the title of the poem in relation to the first and second line. Raise the question as to why Pound called an image a "vortex"and the Imagists "Vorticists" in the early stages of the movement.

Divide the class into three or four person teams. Assign each team to read and develop a brief written summary of and report back on one excerpt of Yeats' autobiography. One team, for instance, would cover his response to the Romantic poets, another, his PreRaphaelite "period", others, his interaction with William Morris, his association with the Rhymer's Club, George Bernard Shaw, and other Victorians; other teams could cover his response to the new art forms of the Imagists, Symbolists, etc., particularly the influences of Ezra Pound and Stephane Mallarme.

Read aloud a translation of Stephane Mallarme's poem, "l'apres-midi d'un faune" (if possible, have a student read the poem in French). Discuss the "Symbolist" qualities of the poem, reminding students that Yeats was strongly influenced by the Symbolist school and their concept of a "third reality" emerging from a symbol.

Also, some students could make a connection with Debussy's music composition by the same name, particularly examining tone quality of the music in relation to tone quality of the poem. A companion study for studentd interested in dance could be researching the choreography and performances of Loie Fuller; much of her work centered on the imaginative transformation of nature through symbol. (Jowitt documents Mallarme's comment on Fuller's work as "the visual embodiment of the idea"., symbol created by costumes and movement.

Review (or introduce) basic precepts of Romantic thought, giving particular attention to the emphasis placed on the mystical. (Note to teacher: range and depth of this background work could be as limited as sharing a few poems of the Romantics to covering some in- depth work, for older students, that included such aspects as analysis of the Sublime, Fundamental Unity, and the Kantian idea of the Categorical Imperative.)

If students have not covered Lesson I of the Unit, related to geographical background of Ireland, consider using some of the suggested activities to provide a backdrop for further study of Yeats.

Set up a collaborative project in which small groups examine a few works by the Pre-Raphaelites for the purpose of demonstrating aspects that Yeats, as suggested by his autobiography, found appealing For instance: one group could examine and share one or two poems by Christina Rossetti; another could focus on Algernon Swineburne; another could find prints to display of Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

Assign students especially interested in art to construct and present a lesson on Modernist art forms (Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, etc.); follow with a discussion of how these forms relate to movements within the Modernist literary canon, such as that of the Imagists, Symbolists, Cubists (Gertrude Stein).

Evoke students to think about specific ways these forms might demonstrate the Modernist idea that "less is more". As part of this conversation, in preparation for explicating Yeats' poetry, also examine

ways Modernist art forms accommodate the modern arguments that ambiguity and relativity dominate human experience and knowledge.

Encourage students interested in dance to engage in a special project related to changing dance idiom of the late 19th and early 20th century time period. The project should incorporate such figures as Isadore Duncan, Ruth St. Dennis, Ted Shawn, and Martha Graham; the presentation could be in the form of an oral report supplemented with video excerpts or prints, or it could be in Web page or student-made (including a student demonstration) video. An important follow-up step would be a discussion of how the changing dance idiom reflects the changing aspects of form in other genres of art and culture (painting, literature, music; also, photography, architecture, fashion, etc.).
{There is a notation in a current book by Deborah Jowitt, Time and the Dancing Image, in which she quotes J B Yeats response to seeing Isadora Duncan perform for the first time.}

An interesting way to pull together specific background material valuable to understanding how Yeats work fits into the canon of literary tradition would be to have students role play impromptu or designed "conversations" built around specific areas of emphasis. For instance, W B Yeats and Jack Yeats in dialogueJ with John Ruskin and Walter Pater concerning the new forms of art expression in relation to the traditional. There are numerous possibilities for engaging students in impromptu "conversation" topics based on assigned readings related to the cultural shifts of the time and Yeats' responses to these shifts. Such "conversations" could also involve personalities related to Irish Nationalist Movement and could incorporate the reading of a Yeats' poem to fuel the dialogue.

Assign students to read and prepare for discussion, T. S. Eliot's essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent". Examine selections of Yeats' poetry, to "test" Eliot's theory, for instance, Leda and the Swan.

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Lesson IV: The Individual Fingerprints: the Mature Years

Overview:
To initiate a close textual examination of Yeats' of some of Yeats' best-known poetry, encourage students first to assess the prevailing structural pattern(s) of one of his poems, then to delineate aspects of the texture. For instance, is the poem structured in a traditional poetic pattern (sonnet, ballad, ode, etc.)? Is it structured by a sustained metaphor, simile, personification, symbol? Is it bound together structurally by juxtaposition? chronology? direct address? Are several of the above patterns working in the poem, giving the poem added complexity through concentric levels of binding forces?

What tone quality emerges from the inculcating elements of the texture of the poem, i.e., the diction, imagery, rhythm, syntax? Is the tone predominantly assonant? dissonant? Are the images primarily sensory images? If so, is any one sense experience"weighted" - visual, auditory, etc.?

Have students conjecture about the "meaning" that emerges from the synthesis of the above aspects of form (craftsmanship). Encourage them to define the logical relationship between and /or among stanzas (where applicable) and to abstract any "third dimension" of meaning, identifying their perception of what specific aspects of craftsmanship generate a " third dimension".

The above approach to analysis lends itself to several brief in-class writing responses.

Extend the discussion by examining the concept of "organic unity" as it relates to artistic expression, particularly in the Yeats poem under discussion.

Deepen the discussion of "meaning" by explicating the following two poems:

- *Leda and the Swan*
- *The Second Coming*

Clarify Yeats' philosophy of cycles of history as he develops it through his various "gyre" images. (the continuum of the dissolution of civilizations as each lives out a two-thousand year cycle of developing, growing, decaying, to be replaced by another two- thousand year cycle of civilization that will go through the same stages)

Discuss the term "metaphysical conceit". Ask students to consider whether or not the images in the two poems are "metaphysical conceits". Ask them to write a brief explanation of their conclusions, clarifying their position with specific evidence from the text. (Presumably, most of them will argue that the central images of each poem meet the definition. Urge them to be thorough and precise in clarifying specific ways the concrete images "shock" the reader in to the grasp of abstract meaning.)

An explication of one of John Donne's poems would help to clarify the concept of "metaphysical conceit". Suggestions: Valediction Forbidding Mourning; The Relic.

Discuss the image of the "falcon" as a "gyre" image and a metaphysical conceit. Some students could be assigned to prepare a presentation on falconry, giving special attention to the uses of falconry in the past and an explanation (maybe with visual reinforcement) of the circling pattern of the falcon. {Note: Once, when I was teaching this poem, a student volunteered that falconry was his hobby, and offered to bring in his bird for demonstration. The day was arranged; the class adjourned to meet outside. The experience was memorable. Even the sight of the glove and the cover on the bird became reinforcement for discussion of the inner workings of the poem.}

Call attention to the fact that the phrase, " things fall apart" became the title of well-known novel by

Give a brief in-class writing assignment that requires students to delineate specific ways the structure and texture of each poem build Yeats' "gyre" theory of history. Clarify that evaluation of their work will be based not only on the range and depth of their analysis, but also on how precisely and vigorously they argue their position with specific textual evidence.

After collecting papers, consider having students share individual analysis in small groups before opening the discussion out in large group format.

As a companion study to the two "cycle" poems, consider introducing or re-introducing the earlier assignment on the "Dynamo and the Virgin" chapter from Henry Adams', *The Education of Henry Adams*, and adding to it the reading and study of his chapter, "A Dynamic Theory of History".

Further study of "meaning " in Yeats' poetry could center on explication of the following three poems:

- *Byzantium*
- *Sailing to Byzantium*
- *Under Ben Bulben*

Examine the structure and texture of each poem along the lines suggested above.

Clarify Yeats' use of "Byzantium", the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, as the symbol of art, which provides the "ideal life of the soul". Share with students the historical perspective of the city of Byzantium as a holy city, one famous for its dedication to intellectual life and the creation of exquisite art such as paintings, mosaic work, crafts in gold and silver.

If time allows, consider setting up a Web and/or print media "search" project in which students trace some of the background of the city as it becomes Constantinople, then modern Istanbul.

Another special project in which to embed the study of Yeats' poems on Byzantium could be a collaborative study of the "Orientalism" that dominated many areas of art expression in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

For instance, after dividing the class into small groups, assign each group one of the following suggested topics to research and present: the impact of the opening of the Suez Canal and the resumption of relationship with Japan, at the end of the 19th century, as igniting forces of "Orientalism" in painting, music, dance, literature, fashion, and interior design; the paintings of James McNeil Whistler; the "Oriental" choreography of Fokine, Diaghilev, Ruth St. Dennis; a specific, celebrated ballet of the era, for instance, Scheherazade; celebrated classical ballet dancers in the movement, for instance, Anna Pavlova and Vaslav Nijinsky; the music of Rimsky-Korsakov; the use of the "artifice", finger cymbals and gongs in the dance and music idiom.

The above investigation could help ignite a discussion about the artist's imagination and the purpose of art. Such a discussion, for purposes of the study of Yeats' "Byzantium" theory, could focus on such topics as: the nature of Beauty; objectivity versus subjectivity in controlling art expression; inspiration for art; art as "the artifice of eternity" in a transitory world; art as providing the "connectedness" with the spiritual domain; the "Eeolian Harp" " image, as used in Romantic poetry.

To sustain the energy of such a discussion, assign a formal paper, the topic of which would send students directly into the texts of the two "Byzantium" poems. For instance, ask students to construct a thesis (and argue it forcibly with specifics from the text) that asserts their perception of the meaning of "artifice of eternity" as Yeats develops the concept in the poem. Other suggested paper topics: a comparison of Sailing to Byzantium with Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn"; a comparison of Yeats's, "Byzantium" to Shelley's "Mutability," or Wordsworth 's sonnet "Mutability"; a comparison of Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" to Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium.

Close study of the poems, Under Ben Bulben and Blood and the Moon would return students to a "gyre" image. In these poems, however, the "gyre" takes on the connotative properties of a spiral staircase. The persona of the poem ascends to "Byzantium".

Assignments related to a study of these poems could incorporate discussion of vignettes of Dante's trilogy (In some programs, 10th grade students study The Inferno; even a brief encounter with Dante at that level helps to ready them for literature in which they will be immersed later.) The idea of descending
and ascending in a spiral pattern could be reinforced through a little work in Dante.

Another study of the "spiral staircase "image could center on a comparison with the way the image emerges in T.S. Eliot's poem, "Ash Wednesday."

A comparative study of Yeats' and Eliot's poems could also ignite a discussion or offer an opportunity for a written analysis of the two author's assertions concerning "ritual" and the bonding of the present to the past achievements of artists and artisans.

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Lesson V: Selections of Yeats' poetry related to his involvement in the Irish Nationalist movement

Overview:
Yeats, throughout much of his life, was involved in Irish politics. In his younger years, he was actively involved as a propagandist for the Nationalist cause, promoting interest in Irish cultural expression, especially literature, both that of the past and of the new canon. For a brief time, drawn in particularly by his all-consuming, but unrequited love for Maude Gonne, a leader in rebellion against English rule, he was a member of the revolutionary group, the Irish Republican Brotherhood. In 1896, he met Lady Augusta Gregory, and as an outgrowth of her patronage and his collaboration with her, he helped found the Irish National Theatre, home of the Abbey Players. In 1922, he was appointed to the Senate of the new Irish Free State.

The following poems reflect, from different perspectives and different levels of subjectivity, the idealism of Yeats' involvement in the Irish Nationalist Movement. Three also mirror his passionate love for Maude Gonne, and give glimpses of ways the woman and the cause were intertwined in his consciousness.

September 1913 — Easter 1916

On A Political Prisoner
No Second Troy The Folly of Being Comforted
A Bronze Head

Develop a comparative study of Yeats' responses to the Irish Nationalist Movement by examining the diction, images, allusions, rhythm, and tone quality of each poem, hypothesizing about the level of subjectivity evidenced through these poetic elements.

Suggestion one:
Define the word "subjective" as opposed to "objective."

Closely examine the poems related to events ("September 1913," "Easter 1916," and "On A Political Prisoner") and construct, for each poem, a one-sentence (precis) that defines the basic statement of the poem.

Culminate the exercise by assigning a brief essay in which students take a position on which of the three poems is the most subjective, arguing their position with a range (as suggested above, diction, images, rhythm, etc.) of specific evidence from the texts.

Suggestion two:
Ask students to write a brief clarification of their perception of Yeats's attitude toward Maud Gonne as it comes through "No Second Troy" and one or both of the poems, "The Folly of Being Comforted" and/or "A Bronze Head." What are the currents of emotions? In what specific ways are these currents of emotion projected?

Suggestion three:
Assign a paper in which students compare the image of women projected in "No Second Troy" with the image of women projected in Wordsworth's "She Was a Phantom of Delight," and/or Byron's "She Walks in Beauty." Suggest that they also might want to read Yeats's poem, "In Memory of Eva Gore-Booth and Con Markiewicz," in which he makes another comment on women who have dedicated their lives to political causes.

Suggestion four:
Assign selections from James Joyce's, *Dubliners*. Consider, particularly, "Eveline" and "The Dead." Have students develop a paper in which they compare Yeats's outlook on Ireland in the late 19th and early 20th century with that of Joyce as the observations come through the descriptions of the exposition and personae of the poems and stories.

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Lesson VI: Jack Yeats: A Few Samplings From The Mature Years

Overview:
T. J. Rosenthal, in his biographical account, *The Art of Jack Yeats*, makes several connections between specific JackYeats' paintings and sources of literature. He also makes references to ways aspects of Jack Yeats's works align with that of other painters. Rosenthal's observations are the springboards for the following suggested lesson designs.

Suggestion one:
Rosenthal (pg. 43) gives some background on Jack Yeats's painting, *Helen*. He cites the family legend that the Yeats's maternal grandparents' name, Pollexfens, was derived from that of Helen of Troy's brother, Pollex. He notes that the Pollexfen's business, when young Jack (as indicated in Lesson II), spent summers at his maternal grandparents' home in Sligo, was ships. Rosenthal, in this account, also mentions Marlowe's Helen.

Jack Yeats' painting, *Helen*, could be the centerpiece for several integrated instructional designs incorporating literature, music and dance. For instance:

Christopher Marlowe' s *The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus* is a rich classroom source for initiating discussions and brief writing assignments, based on close textual analysis of passages of the text that probe such topics as: the cultural ethos of the late Medieval/Early Renaissance time period, especially the implications of the rise of universities; the breakdown of the Medieval Church; the growth of humanism; the Faust legend and the extension of "the Faustian aspiration"; the nature of necromancy ; the use of alchemy as part of necromancy; the structural pattern of drama that breaks with the Greek Unities, and becomes the pattern for Shakespeare, incorporating subplot, comic relief, etc.; the resonating elements of the text in relation to Shakespeare's Henry, the Fourth, Part I. One of the richest moments in the text, however, is Faustus's last request before being dragged down to Hell: his request to have Helen of Troy as his paramour. The famous segment in which he addresses the shade of Helen as she passes before him is often lifted out of the text and printed as a separate poem.

Based on the reading of the poem, encourage students to sketch a profile of Helen, either in words or in studio art idiom (drawing, painting, sculpture).

Other poems on Helen could be included. As inspiration for developing the above profile. Edgar Allen Poe's, "To Helen," for instance, could be added. A collaborative assignment could send students to the Web and/or print media to find other depictions of Helen.

The culminating experience of the above activities would be an exercise in visual literacy, in which students would draw a comparative analysis of various other profiles of Helen with that depicted in Jack Yeats' painting, focusing on delineation of characteristics of her "supreme" beauty; how the projection of the general aura of Helen as a woman is achieved; overall tone quality tone; the "rhythm" of the canvas in relation to the "rhythm" of the various poems.

William Butler Yeats' poem, "No Second Troy," would be another provocative companion source to the painting. This emphasis could broaden the conversation to include reminding students that William Butler also spent a lot of time at Sligo with his grandparents and that the "Helen", "Troy" images are undercurrents in Leda and the Swan and occur in many other of William Butler's poems.

Rosenthal's reference to Breughel's painting, *The Fall of Icarus*, brought to mind W. H. Auden's, *Musee des Beaux Arts*. This poem could be the centerpiece for examination of several of Jack Yeats's paintings. For instance:

Yeats's painting, *The Scene Painter's Rose*, mentioned by Rosenthal in relation to Breughal, could be examined by students from the point of view of Auden's theme in *Musee Des Beaux Arts*. What statement emerges from the juxtaposition of the red rose in relation to the backstage "props" and flats?

a companion source to the above activity could be an examination of the concept of the rose as a symbol as it emerges in William Butler Yeats's poem, "The Rose of the World."

Suggestions for topics for other comparative studies based on Jack Yeats's paintings:

- his depiction of horses, compared for instance, with those of Rosa Bonheur
- his studies of Ireland's traveling circuses to Barnum and Bailey posters (both past and present)
- his caricatures of Irish political figures and themes with those of other artists, American artists Peter Arno and Ben Shahn, for instance
- the depiction of his race track figures in alignment with Damon Runyon characters
- the themes of his depiction of war in comparison with the poetry of Seigfred Sasoon in "Attack" or Wilfred Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth," for instance

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